

September 2002

Attendees and Area Announcements listed after minutes.

General Environmental Health Topics

Frequency of Surveys

A while back, there was a decision that branch chiefs could change frequencies of surveys in WebEHRS. Not everyone was comfortable with that decision. Lately, people have been asking Darren how they can change the survey frequencies, so the issue has come up again. Kelly said that she had Darren deactivate that feature so no one would be able to change the survey frequencies any more. What is listed as survey frequency for each facility type in the definitions will stay as the minimum number of surveys. If any frequencies are going to be changed, they are going to be changed across the board. In addition, that would need to be discussed by other than DEHS Branch Chiefs (e.g. OEHE Directors, Tribes). There was a discussion about the reasoning behind this decision, and several folks offered their opinions. To make a long story short, everyone on the call wanted to be able to change frequencies at will and Kelly was the lone dissenter. Al Knapp came up with sort of a compromise that seemed to satisfy most everyone on the call. Darren will change the "next survey date" feature to allow longer frequencies, however the actual frequencies listed in the definitions will not be changed. This will keep those folks who are bothered by seeing overdue notices, but don't want to do the recommended number of surveys, from having to look at them.

Recruitment Meeting Update

Kelly reported on the recruitment meeting sponsored by Environmental Health Support Center in Albuquerque last month. There is a new effort to coordinate and increase recruitment efforts by IHS OEHE staff. Each area was to appoint a recruitment coordinator and send them to that meeting. DCP and Associate Recruiter Program (ARP) representatives also attended. We discussed who would recruit where at schools, how to keep track of contacts made during those recruitment meetings, what minimum criteria need to be met by those making recruitment visits, who will make and send out recruitment materials, and where IHS's efforts fit into the ARP.

There were a lot of good discussions, some conclusions, and assignments made during the meeting. Several notable items follow:

There will be a committee formed of engineers and EHOs that will work on developing marketing materials and act as sort of an IHS Recruitment Steering Committee. Engineers have taken the lead right now, and all volunteers (except for one individual) are engineers. Kelly asked for two more EHO volunteers for this committee. Paul Young expressed an interest, but needed to check with Ed Fluette first.

Another item was the development of a website to track contacts made during recruitment meetings. This website will contain basic data on each contact so we can sort of help them through the application process. As soon as they make applications for either general duty or

COSTEP assignments, they will drop out of this database and go into DCP's so there will be no overlap.

We also discussed minimum requirements for recruiters. It was decided we didn't need to require everyone become an Associate Recruiter, but it would be encouraged.

Also discussed was the ability of Branch Chiefs or Area Recruitment Coordinators to have access to applicants on the DCP website. This is something that would be immensely helpful so Alan and Kelly wouldn't have to be the only ones looking at the applicant databases. Alan said that until everyone gets access to these reports, DEHS HQ staff will continue to have scanned copies of applications available for interested Branch Chiefs.

Noticeably not represented at this meeting were EHOs. Only Oklahoma and Nashville sent EHOs; the rest sent Engineers. This alone is not a big problem, however as the meeting went on, it became clear that EHOs had not participated in any of the pre-meeting planning. EHSC requested each area send them a list of all schools they planned to do any recruiting at, along with the names of who would be making the visits. All recruiting visits listed were going to be made by engineers to schools they identified. None listed recruiting visits by EHOs.

Kelly said EHOs need to become more active in this effort. Please talk with your Area recruitment coordinators to learn more about how you can participate. At the very least, each of you needs to work with the coordinators to develop a list of schools EHOs from your Area plan to visit. We will be talking more about this as time goes by, so if as a group, we're concerned about increasing our recruitment efforts, we still have a chance to get more involved.

Craig mentioned that DCP was working through PSC to develop category-specific brochures and displays. The committee Kelly was trying to get volunteers for will use what DCP develops for PHS-wide use and adapt it to IHS-specific use. How we're paying for this is still being discussed. Both SFC and EHS have offered to contribute funds to this effort.

Annual Report

Tom Crow will be working for us as a contractor to compile the not-so-annual Annual DEHS Report (for 2002). He will be contacting many of you to update what you sent in to Alan for 2001. We hope to have a completed report done by the end of this year.

Next DEHS Annual Meeting

The next meeting is scheduled for March 4-5, 2003. Meeting location has not yet been decided. It turns out SFC has also scheduled their annual meeting that same week. We've been talking back here, that we might want to combine at least one day of both meetings so we can have joint sessions on common topics. One of those items being our recent "data consolidation effort". Maybe another topic would be our recruitment efforts. SFC has been tentatively working with a hotel in San Antonio, TX, but they're willing to change their contract if we want to hook up with them. Kelly said she was inclined to expand our meeting by one day, and have at least part of that one extra day be a joint meeting. Everyone on the call seemed agreeable.

Head Start e-Surveys

Darren referred to Ralph Fulgham's email about using the new and improved Head Start e-Surveys in WebEHRS. He has noticed that several areas have already begun using this. If anyone has any questions, call Darren. Currently about 32 surveys have been put into the system. Oklahoma is testing other survey types like food service, which is an area we will be expanding into later. Right now, we just want everyone on board with the Head Start e-Surveys. If you don't have a survey due any time soon, start testing the system ahead of time. Just remember to delete your test data when you're done.

Food Code Survey

Alan heard back from one or two Areas and wanted to make sure everyone else had received the survey he sent out. Down the road, we want to incorporate this data into WebEHRS, but right now, this is being collected separately for the Association of Food and Drug Officials (AFDO) survey that was talked about last year. John Sery didn't remember receiving the survey, so Alan will resend to him. This survey was in a spreadsheet format with all the Areas, all the tribes, and number of food service establishments for each tribe. There was a series of questions for each establishment: Who performs the surveys, are surveys consultative or regulatory, what version of food code is used, is there a food code in place for the tribe, is the tribal food code based on an FDA code, and if so, on what version is it based?

DEHS is on a Federal Food Coalition, and Tom Crow is going to be their consultant. Our position is that FDA should fund a food safety specialist for tribes. The data from this survey will back our position. FDA has a national effort to adopt the food code in all the states, but this misses 334 tribes with over 4000 food service facilities. Jeff Smith asked how the number of facilities for each tribe was determined. Alan said he pulled that information directly out of WebEHRS so it is a direct reflection of how you coded food establishments. It's a combination of facility types 42, 45, 46, 47, 48, and 80. This data was extracted by Area, SU, then tribe. The summary tab in the spreadsheet shows the source of these.

A few Areas have added other facilities since Alan sent the survey out. This could be used as a quality assurance check to make sure your staff are coding the facilities correctly. This is somewhat timely because everyone should be ensuring the accurateness of their facilities listed in WebEHRS by October 1, 2002 at 4:00 PM Eastern Time. This is when the national RRM report will be run. Jeff Smith said he wanted to go over the numbers with Alan after the conference call.

Injury Prevention Topics

Injury Prevention Youth Initiative Money

We were fortunate to get \$253,000 from the Youth Initiative funding. Some of the money went directly to the Areas to support initiatives like Sleep Safe and Ride Safe. Judy Thierry, the IHS MCH Coordinator, is very supportive of injury prevention. In addition to the \$253,000 we sent out, probably another \$100,000 to \$150,000 by-passed our office and went out directly to specific projects (e.g. Anchorage, Oklahoma, Albuquerque Areas). We also got \$2,000 added to the budgets of the Part 1 Infrastructure Grantees to do Child Passenger Protection Initiatives

for the upcoming year. Eighteen of the Notice of Grant Awards went out yesterday. We hope to supplement the funds for the infrastructure projects next year with other sources of money.

Course Revision Committee Update

The three injury prevention courses (years ago called Level 1, 2, and 3) have been getting revised with help from the University of North Carolina for some time now. Now called, "Introductory, Intermediate, and Advanced Injury Prevention Courses", they will all be tied into seven learning objectives and be truly sequential. The revised Introductory course was first taught last December and then presented at least 7 times in the Areas. The Intermediate course is scheduled to be presented in Albuquerque in November. We're almost done with the content of that course. The last revision meeting for the Intermediate course is scheduled for October in Albuquerque. The Advanced course is scheduled for presentation in April in Oklahoma City, and the next revision meeting for this Advanced course is scheduled for October in Albuquerque.

All three revised courses will be "portable", meaning the Areas will be able to present them. Areas planning to present a course locally, first need to have someone involved in their course, to have presented at a previous one. Instructors should have at least attended the course prior to presenting any of the sessions for the local course. Aberdeen is planning to conduct the first Intermediate course in an Area and in preparation for that, they are sending three staff to the November course. Be sure your Area Injury Prevention Specialists attend the course in November if they want to put one on in their Area. This is a quality control effort that has been instituted in the revision process. In addition, there will be a "content" committee that will be in charge of annual review and updates for all three courses.

Program Development Track of Fellowship

The announcement will be coming out soon for the new Program Development Fellowship Track. Look on the injury website (<http://www.dehs.ihs.gov/noinjuries>) for the brochure, announcement, and application. Larry Berger has taken the lead on this and is working closely with Bobby Villines to pull all this together. The ball is just about in your court. Areas need to begin recruiting now. Applications will be due the end of December, and the selections will be made by the end of January. As a reminder, this track of the Fellowship focuses on development of projects in the community vs. the old, "Epidemiology-based" track. Some major distinctions include no bachelor degree requirement, and no three-week academic session. It will include training away from the office, and a project in the community. Where the Epidemiology Track usually involved a research-based project, this new track will require a community development project (e.g. implementation of a model car seat program, a grant proposal for a CDC or IHS grant). The target audience includes those who have previously gone through the Epidemiology Fellowship, Part 1 Infrastructure Grantees, Tribal Health Directors, Service Unit Environmental Health Officers. This is a similar audience that was targeted for the Epidemiology Fellowship, but with no degree requirement and only one week at a time away from home.

Institutional Environmental Health

IEH Training Program Evaluation

Our contract with Tom Crow includes an evaluation of the IEH Training Program (similar to what UNC did for the IP courses). He'll be working with Merritt and Jeff Morris, SUDs/CEOs, as well as many of the other IEH officers and other interested parties.

IEH Residency Rotations

Merritt gave an update on Brian Hroch's and Gary Carter's IEH Residency activities. They're well into their professional rotations and are being kept very busy. They both attended and presented at NEHA this year, visited PIMC and Cherokee Hospital, completed a Tribal Emergency Response Management Course at FEMA, attended an OSHA course in Philadelphia, and attended a review course for the CIH credential. This month they're beginning their FDA Radiation courses. One of the changes this year is that we're trying to get the students certified as radiation surveyors before they are placed in the Areas. That is one of the goals of the residency program. They have several other radiation courses they will be attending and will be conducting actual surveys in some of the Areas and at NIH in Bethesda. They'll also be doing a health physics rotation at National Navy Medical Center. By the end of May they should be FDA certified. Merritt said he'll keep us informed of what else they'll be doing on the next conference call.

Vacancy Table

Please be sure to keep the Vacancy Table on the DEHS website current. The table is located at <http://www.dehs.ihs.gov>.

Participants and Area Announcements

Aberdeen: Not on call

Albuquerque: Fan Robinson. No announcements.

Anchorage: Tom Coolidge & Jeff Smith. Jeff wanted to check with management first, but he wanted someone from his office to volunteer for the Recruitment Committee.

Bemidji: Diana Kuklinski. The closing date for the Service Unit Sanitarian position in Bemidji District Office is September 9. The Red Lake Tribal Sanitarian position is still open and the contact information is on the DEHS website. Interested applicants for the Tribal Sanitarian position are to contact the Tribal Health Director directly. Kelly asked Diana if a particular applicant had contacted her yesterday about either of these positions. It turned out he hadn't, so Kelly said she would talk with Diana after the call.

Billings: John Sery. John commended Darren on the work he did with the Head Start e-Surveys. John Holland said it was very good.

California: Paul Young. No announcements.

Nashville: Craig Shepherd. Craig updated everyone about LT Leon Morgan's status. Several Areas had considered him for positions after Porch Creek terminated the MOA. He came to Nashville, where he was asked to find a job as soon as possible. He finally got hooked up with FDA in Memphis, TN, and will start there September 16. Craig said he was also moving on to another job with CDC, NCEH. He will begin December or January. Everyone is sorry to see Craig go, but we expect to continue working with him as we strengthen our relationship with NCEH.

Navajo: Ken Secord. Joel Hustedt started work Sept. 3. They should be picking somebody for the Fort Defiance Field Sanitarian position next week. Winslow contracted with IHS August 30. Ken didn't get on the call until after the discussion about changing survey frequencies. He emailed his comments later, that stated he was against changing frequencies.

Oklahoma: Harold Cully. No announcements.

Phoenix: Not on call.

Portland: Al Knapp. No announcements.

Tucson: Mark Pike. John Schmitz will be going to Casa Grande as the Sr. Service Unit Sanitarian.

Environmental Health Support Center: Not on call.

Rockville: Kelly Taylor, Alan Dellapenna, Merritt Lake, Darren Buchanan.

Next Call

October 3, 2002, 12:00 PM Eastern Time, conference call numbers are the same for each call:

Dial in Number: **1-888-323-7711** (for all calls)

*Pass Code: **90841** (for all calls)